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ABSTRACT

This report presents findings from a survey of Indiana school superintendents' and school board members' attitudes about the school's role in sex education. Data were obtained for the study by means of a questionnaire; 645 completed "Family Life and Sex Education Questionnaires" were returned. Data, presented in tabular form and followed by a summary, were gathered on: (1) demography of the responding population; (2) policy makers' views on the school's role in sex education; (3) reasons for offering sex education; (4) reasons why sex education is not offered in schools; (5) the expected outcomes of well-planned programs; (6) approved content for such programming; and (7) views on a variety of statements about sex education which are often found in the literature. Also reported are respondents' comments on: (1) the place/locale for sex education; (2) sex education with/without values; (3) emphasis within a program; (4) planning such a program; (5) role/preparation of the teacher; (6) opposition to such instruction; and (7) the research design/questionnaire. A summary lists 37 findings, drawn from responses to the questionnaire, about sex education in Indiana along with 10 conclusions about Indiana policy makers' attitudes and 7 recommendations. (JD)

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SEXUALITY EDUCATION AS VIEWED BY LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS AND SUPERINTENDENTS IN INDIANA

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PREFACE

This study of the views of school superintendents and school board members in Indiana on the role of the schools in sex education was undertaken to compare these views with those held by the public at large, as determined by a variety of polls over the past 15 years. These polls in the recent past have indicated that upward of 70 percent of the respondents were in favor of an active role for the school. In spite of this, little progress has been made over the years toward making sex education a legitimate part of the school curriculum. One theory posed as the reason for the school's slow acceptance of sex education as its responsibility was that the gate keepers/policy makers were opposed. Thus this study was proposed.

To conduct a study of this magnitude about a sometimes, controversial topic takes the cooperation of a number of people. We are indebted to all those board members and superintendents who took the time to respond to the inquiry - this bodes well for their concern for the youth of Indiana and their needs. It is gratifying to know that people placed in positions of trust within our schools are willing to stand up and be counted. We thank the Lilly Endowment, Inc. for seeing the value in the Study and providing the funding necessary to carry it out; the expertise of Charlie Fields, Jack Peterson, Phyllis Lewis, Barbara Maves and Martha Nye for their assistance in the development of the instrument; and, the policy makers in the Harrison-Washington School Corporation in Delaware County for functioning as our pilot group.

We hope the results are distributed widely and analyzed completely - that the end result will be what's best for the youth of Indiana in helping them become responsible adults.

Dave Marion Neal Jones

I. Introduction

The inclusion of sex education in the public school systems is still an extremely controversial topic in the U.S. today. Consequently, both the existence and nature of sex education programs are persistently questioned in many individual schools and school districts.

During the last decade, there have been many heated conflicts over sex education in many communities. In some cases teachers have been fired, and in other cases school board members, administrators and instructors have been removed from office primarily because of their views on sex education. During those conflicts, many competing claims have been made by the supporters and opponents of sex education. For example, the opposition has claimed that sex education will destroy morality, increase sexual activity, and thereby increase pregnancy as well. Supporters of sex education have claimed that greater knowledge, higher self-esteem, greater clarity of needs and values, and improved decision-making skills, communication skills, and assertiveness skills will reduce unwanted pregnancies and facilitate healthier relationships. These are but a sample of the many claims made by both opponents and proponents of sex education programs sponsored by the public school system (Kirby, Alter, Scales, 1979).

Most educators, school administrators and a large number of citizens support the ultimate goals of sex education if the program is comprehensive and is staffed by a competent instructor. In contrast, there are many citizens who believe that sex education should only be taught in the home or the church. These citizens and school officials frequently oppose sex education in the schools. However, it has been revealed by many studies that most Americans support sex education in the schools.

There has been a significant increase in public support for sex education since 1970. A Gallup Poll (1978) reported that 77 percent of Americans believe

that sex education should be taught in the schools compared to 65 percent in 1970. The same survey reported that 70 percent of Americans believe that contraception should be taught in the schools, nearly double the proportion holding that belief in 1970. In 1974, the National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago interviewed a random sample of 1,484 adult Americans. About 78 percent favored both sex education and the provision of birth control information to teens who needed it (Snyder, E. E. and Spreitzer, E., 1976). In a recent random survey (Phi Delta Kappan, 1981) 70 percent of the respondents indicated that sex education should be included in the instructional program of high schools and 22 percent said that sex education should not be. More locally, Yarber (1981) recently found overwhelming public support from parents of third, sixth, ninth, and twelfth graders in a large county school corporation in North Central Indiana. Other less random surveys have produced the same conclusion that the majority of the Americans favor the inclusion of sex instruction in the school curriculum, especially in the secondary school.

Student support for the inclusion of sex education programs in the public schools has also been documented frequently. Research has indicated that Indiana students are no different than students nationally. In the most recent Indiana School Health Education Study (Jones, 1977) it was reported that 82 percent of the 2,524 seniors sampled favored the provision of sex education in the public schools.

Although sex education has been touted as one of the most controversial issues that a school board member may deal with, much of the professional literature for school administrators supports the concept of making available a well-developed community-participation school sex education program (Scott, 1972; Nolte, 1973; NJEA Review, 1981). In a review of legal support, Nolte states that the courts in this country stand virtually 100 percent behind those boards of education that offer sex education programs in the public schools. Poe (1972) offered the following advice in the American School Board Journal on preventing

controversy regarding sex education: Be sure (1) you are fully informed about and approve of your district's program; (2) a cross section group of parents understands and OK's the curriculum; (3) the program operates under sound professional guidance; (4) teachers assigned this delicate subject do not abuse or misuse their responsibilities. If the foregoing advice is observed, your board can weather virtually any sex hullabaloo.

Despite parent and student approval of sex education in the schools, the actual prevalence of students receiving sex education and the number of schools offering related programs has not been clearly established. In 1974 the NEA found that only 10 percent of 800 public school systems fully provided sex education (NEA, 1974). The National Institute of Education in 1978 randomly sampled U.S. public high schools and found that 36 percent offered a course in sex education (NIE, 1978). This estimate appears unreasonably high and subsequent analysis suggests that many respondents considered a separate course any unit on sex education within any semester's course (Kirby, Alter, Scales, 1979). In a third national survey of over 500 school superintendents, Hottois and Milner (1975) reported that over half had some kind of sex education program. This estimate is probably high because districts with sex education were apparently more likely to return the questionnaires (Kirby, Alter, Scales, 1979).

Moreover, the percentage of schools offering sex education is less than the percentage of school districts offering sex education, and similarly, the percentage of students receiving sex education is less than the percentage of schools offering such instruction. Thus, the estimates about the number of schools and school districts offering sex education need to be reduced in order to estimate the percentage of students receiving instruction (Kirby, Alter, Scales, 1979).

From the literature presented above, it is apparent that there is much public favor and parental consent for sex education. However, the actual implementation of such programs in the public schools appear to be lacking. In determining the reasons for this obvious gap, it is necessary to focus further

investigation on the school policy makers, that is the local school boards and superintendents. An investigation of the attitudes, commitment level and the perceptions these policy makers have toward sex education programs may partially explain the gap between the public's positive feeling toward sex education and the non-compliance of the school system in providing them.

While it is generally accepted that there should be local autonomy regarding sex education instruction, most states have developed state guidelines for this topic area. Only three states require sex instruction, Maryland, Kentucky and New Jersey. The state of Indiana is somewhat unique in that it is one of the few states, and the only state in the Midwest, without such guidelines for sex education. In a recent comprehensive study, it was found that the supportiveness of state guidelines was related to the proportion of schools in that state having separate courses in sex education (Kirby, Alter, Scales, 1976). That is, the development of comprehensive state guidelines was likely to occur if there was a substantial number of schools or districts in that state providing sex education programs.

In summary, if the state of Indiana is to move forward in the establishment of sex education programs, it is of great importance to be able to understand the reasons for the disparity between public acceptance and the provision of programs by the school systems.

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II. Research Protocal

A. Instrument Development

The instrument entitled "Family Life and Sex Education Questionnaire" (see enclosure) was developed during the time period of October, 1981 - April, 1982 and included several phases. Previously published questionnaires were searched to obtain items which have been field tested and which were related to the following topics: the public schools' responsibility for providing sex education, reasons for including sex education in the curriculum, barriers to sex education programming, desired outcomes for sex education, the "ideal" curriculum, and selected opinions on school sex education programming.

After the initial synthesis of items was undertaken, several revisions were made on the instrument from suggestions obtained by research professionals. The instrument was then reviewed by Mr. Charles Fields, Executive Director of the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents, Mr. Jack Peterson, Executive Director of the Indiana School Board Association, and Phyllis Lewis, Department of Public Instruction, Division of Curriculum in December, 1981 for their input on the design of the questionnaire and the recommended survey procedures. The input from these professionals was instrumental in the design of the final form of the questionnaire.

The next step was to pilot test the instrument. This was accomplished in March, 1982 with one school board and superintendent participating. Final revisions were based on their input and the questionnaire was printed in its final form in April, 1982.

B. Data Collection

The study packet was mailed directly to each board member and superintendent of all of the school corporations listed in the ISBA 1981-82 Directory in mid-April, 1982. This packet contained several items: a letter describing the purpose and nature of the survey, the actual questionnaire, a self-addressed/stamped return envelope, and a return postcard (see enclosure A). The return postcard was included to: (1) insure the anonymity of the respondents, (2) identify persons to send a reminder notice to, (3) give the respondents who do not complete the questionnaire an opportunity to state their reasons why.

A total of 1,933 packets were mailed April 12, 1982, representing the board members and the superintendents of the Indiana Public Schools. A follow-up request was made in early May to urge non-responders to complete the questionnaire (see enclosure B). May 24, 1982 was determined as the cut-off day for questionnaires to be submitted so that data analysis could be completed.

C. Data Analysis

Seven hundred and fifty-three (753) participants responded to the request for information. Of this total, one hundred eight (108) chose not to complete the questionnaire and stated their reasons for not having done so. The major reasons given were:

Instrument too long	(N = 48)
Prefer to give no reason	(N = 25)
Instrument poorly constructed	(N = 22)
Instrument too complicated	(N = 14)
Issue not a concern for schools	(N = 8)
Topic too controversial	(N = 7)

There were 645 completed questionnaires returned. However, not all were fully complete or received in time for data analysis. Thus there were 616 questionnaires used for the final analysis of data.

The data from the questionnaires was then keypunched into a data file at the Ball State University Academic Computing Center in order to perform subsequent data analysis. The Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (frequencies program) was used to do preliminary analysis of the data and to construct the appropriate frequency tables.

III. Presentation of Data

The data will be presented in tabular form followed by a brief summary of each table. Tables have been developed illustrating the: (1) demographic profile of the responding population; (2) policy makers' views on the school's role in sex education, generally; and their school corporation, specifically; (3) reasons for offering quality sex education; (4) reasons why sex education is not offered in schools; (5) the expected outcomes of well-planned programs; (6) approved content for such programming; and, (7) views on a variety of statements about sex education which are often found in the literature. One should keep in mind that while 616 policy makers in Indiana schools responded (157 superintendents, 459 board members) with usable questionnaires, not all responded to every question and thus the N for questions will vary. There were 288 local school boards listed in the 1981-82 edition of the Indiana School Boards Association Directory. This document was used to determine the study population.

Table I. Demographic profile of Respondents (N = 616)*

	N	(%)
Male	483	(78)
Female	111	(18)
Married	567	(92)
Unmarried	25	(4)
Parent	328	(53)
Non-parent	180	(29)
Age		
under 30	6	(1)
30-39	85	(14)
40-49	201	(33)
50-59	230	(37)
over 60	73	(12)
Position		
Super	157	(26)
Board Mem	432	(70)
School Size		
Urban	108	(18)
Suburban	138	(22)
Rural	333	(54)

*not all N's and percentages equal 616 and 100% respectively because of missing data

The respondents in the study were primarily male reflecting a national pattern of male dominance in school administrative and policy making positions. Better than 90 percent were married with slightly more than half having children in school. Seventy percent of the respondents were between the ages of 40 and 60, typical ages for people with children in the school system. Better than half of the respondents indicated that their school system was considered to be rural - a given since most Indiana school systems serve rural areas. One hundred fifty-seven school superintendents responded to the questionnaire. These were responses from 459 board members. Of the 288 school systems listed in the Directory, two hundred sixty-three had at least one member of their policy making group respond. In some cases total board membership responded. There were twenty-seven instruments which omitted the position of the respondent. One could reasonably assume that the majority of these were board members.

Table II. The School's Role/Responsibility in Human Sexuality (percentages)

	Yes	No	Don't Know[a]
Does the school have a responsibility to teach about human sexuality?	462(75)	106(17)	27(4)
Do you approve of such programs in your schools?	503(82)	59(10)	37(6)
Would your school board colleagues agree with your belief?	345(56)	73(12)	182(30)
Is sex education other than reproductive biology currently being offered in your school system?	319(52)	219(36)	58(9)
If no or don't know to[b] above statement, would you like such a program?	150(53)	84(30)	47(17)
Would you support such a program if a qualified teacher requested it?	213(70)	54(18)	35(12)
Would you support a well-planned program developed by your teachers?	223(73)	52(17)	30(10)
Have there been requests for programs from:			
parents	62(18)	196(57)	84(24)
teachers	64(19)	178(52)	100(30)
students	34(10)	184(55)	115(34)
community leaders	35(11)	198(60)	95(29)
If yes to above statement,[c] would you want to change, (restructure/expand) program?	105(32)	152(47)	67(21)
Has there been any public criticism of the program?	61(19)	235(72)	29(9)
Has there been any public praise of the program?	81(25)	167(52)	71(22)
Are quality materials/ resources available within the school corporation?	183(55)	58(17)	94(28)
Are you aware of successful programs in other school systems in your area?	92(18)	345(66)	89(17)

a) N = 616 but not all responded to every question. Rounding of percentages to nearest whole number accounts for percentages not equaling 100 in all cases.

b) N = 297 ± for this series of questions.

c) N = 319 ± for this series of questions.

It would appear that better than 3 of 4 of the respondents feel that the school has a role in the sex education of today's youth, and 8 of 10 would approve such a program in <u>their</u> school corporation. Interestingly, only slightly more than half believe that their policy maker colleagues agree with them.

While at least 75 percent felt the school should assume some responsibility, only about half (52%) felt little beyond reproductive biology was being offered in their school. Of those who felt that little was being taught beyond reproductive biology, 70 percent stated that they would support well-planned programs taught by qualified teachers. Only 10-20 percent indicated that they had received requests for information of sex education programs from various community groups (parents, teachers, students, community leaders).

Less than 25 percent of those indicating that they had a sex education program in their school corporation stated that the program received either public praise and/or criticism. Most felt that their program had quality resources/materials available. Only about one in five knew of other quality sex education programs in their area.

It would appear that the local school policy makers see the same need and express the same level of support for sex education programs as does the public at large. Many (48%) felt that their school system's program was not as complete as it should be. This might be attributed to the fact that (1) they felt only minimal support for such programming from their colleagues; (2) they were unaware of quality programs in other school systems; (3) they had received few requests for such programming from various community groups.

Table III. Reasons For Offering Sex Education in Schools (Percentage of Responses)

Reason	Very Important	Important	No Opinion	Little Importance	No Importance
In 1980 an estimated 1/3 of all abortions were performed on high school age girls. Such statistics and the attendant ignorance about such issues of sexuality are growing concerns.	53	38	3	4	2
The word "sex" is often incorrectly used, as though the only sexual dimension in life is intercourse. Sex can include many kinds of relationships, feelings, and ideas at various ages and stages.	39	48	4	6	3
Deterrents to premarital sexual intercourse are being removed, but full knowledge of psychological consequences is not being made available to young people.	37	49	8	4	2
Studies conducted in school and public health programs have, for a long time, revealed the ignorance and misinformation which prevails among teenagers and adults in regard to anatomy, human reproduction and sexually transmitted diseases.	32	54	6	7	1
There is good evidence that uninformed children and adolescents most often obtain their sex education from the peer group.	34	50	6	8	2
For good or ill, the fact remains that we live in an age where sex symbols are presented to us everywhere. Adolescents often are lacking standards that would allow them to form mature sexual attitudes in our era of "pop sex".	30	52	7	9	2
The best intentioned parents usually lack information, vocabulary, and naturalness to carry out the all important sex instruction of their children.	25	55	7	11	3

Reason	Very Important	Important	No Opinion	Little Importance	No Importance
Sexual activity, as is the case with other choices one makes, has a cumulative effect in the establishment of the meanings and patterns of life that outlast the experience itself.	34	45	13	7	2
Premarital sex has a variety of meanings. It can symbolize a struggle for independence, a reach toward maturity, a desire to keep up with the crowd. It can be an expression of loneliness and a wish for affection or it can be used as a commodity.	29	50	9	8	4
Signs of inadequate teaching about sexuality are numerous: unhappy people, disorganized homes, divorces, irresponsible behavior, and inability to discuss the subjects of sex and reproduction plainly and without embarrassment.	25	53	9	10	3
Studies show that sex education does not encourage sex activity; on the contrary, it helps young people make wiser decisions.	36	40	17	4	3
Sex can never be fully understood simply by focusing upon it as a physiological process, by concentrating on the sex act, nor by counting or classifying instances of sexual behavior.	26	47	17	7	3
The tasks of an adolescent are: Separation from one's parents; definition of one's sexual role; creation of a value system; and selection of a vocation. All but the last are related to sexual and emotional behavior, attitudes and feelings.	24	49	15	9	4

Reason	Very Important	Important	No Opinion	Little Importance	No Importance
Most teenagers still believe in waiting for sexual fulfillment until they marry. But those who are chaste are increasingly pressed to defend their stand, especially by those who indicate virginity is a sign of immaturity.	25	42	15	13	2
The organized church is beginning to recognize its inability to provide successful sex education alone.	10	30	33	20	8

The reasons offered in support of sex education in the literature were found important or very important by a large majority of the responding policy makers. The one exception to this general statement is "the organized church is recognizing its inability to provide sex education alone". Only 40 percent of the respondents thought this an important reason. All others were accepted by at least 7 of 10 with the most agreement being with the statement relative to high levels of abortion and ignorance about sex (91%). Another reason accorded a high level of importance dealt with the understanding that education about sexuality means much more than the act of intercourse.

Local school policy makers tend to believe that there are many important reasons for the offering of quality sex education programs. Programs using these reasons as justification would appear to meet with their approval.

Table IV. Reasons Opposed to Offering Sex Education in Schools (Percentage of Responses)

Reason	Very Important	Important	No Opinion	Little Importance	No Importance
Concern over parental reaction.	27	54	3	15	2
Teachers are not prepared to teach the subject.	35	42	5	13	5
Concern over community reaction.	18	56	3	21	3
Concern over church reaction.	18	47	7	26	3
Can't be taught without moral education and whose morals do we teach.	26	32	10	23	8
Concern over encouraging youth to be sexually promiscuous.	17	34	8	31	10
Lack of funds to do the job adequately.	17	33	6	30	13
Subject matter is not proper concern for the school.	13	25	10	33	19
Students lack maturity to deal with the subject matter.	6	24	8	44	18
No time available during school day.	5	15	10	42	29

The most important reasons for not offering sex education in the schools seem to be: (1) concern over parental reaction (81%); (2) lack of qualified teachers (77%); and (3) concern over community reaction (73%). With most polls indicating adult support at the level of 70 percent or better, it would appear that limited adult concern is a real factor in inhibiting the establishment of sex education programs. Lack of qualified teachers is certainly a genuine concern of many. What might be helpful to local policy makers would be a concerted effort to profile who should be assigned such instruction as well as guidelines as to what shall constitute a quality, acceptable program.

Reasons against offering sex education which receive the least support as reported by policy makers include: (1) not enough time in the day (20%); (2) students lack maturity to handle the subject matter (30%); and (3) subject matter is not rightly a concern of the school (38%). Available funds is an important reason for one-half of the policy makers.

It would appear that policy makers believe that sex education could and should become a part of the school program with little concern for the logistics of implementation. What seems to be the prime reasons for lack of quality programming are community reaction and quality instructors.

Table V. Goals of Sex Education Programs (Percentages of Responses)

Goal	Very Important	Important	No Opinion	Little Importance	No Importance
To provide accurate information about sexuality.	58	37	1	3	1
To reduce sex related problems such as sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies.	59	35	2	3	1
To encourage more responsible and successful decision making.	46	46	3	3	2
To help people make more informed choices.	47	42	4	5	2
To reduce fears and anxieties about personal sexual development and feelings.	41	49	4	6	1
To facilitate insights into personal sexual behavior.	35	50	6	7	2
To facilitate communication about sexuality with parents and others.	30	55	5	9	2
To develop skills for the management of sexual problems.	25	53	10	11	2
To integrate sex into a balanced and purposeful pattern of living.	24	51	10	12	4
To encourage students to question, explore, and assess their sexual attitudes.	21	52	12	12	3
To create satisfying interpersonal relationships.	22	46	14	14	6
To develop more tolerant attitudes toward the sexual behavior of others.	11	37	15	30	7
To facilitate rewarding sexual expression.	10	33	22	25	9

It appears that policy makers believe the primary goals of sex education programs should be to: (1) provide accurate information (95%); (2) reduce sex related

problems, e.g. STD's and unwanted pregnancies; (3) encourage more responsible decision making (92%); (4) help people make more informed choices (89%); and, (5) reduce fears and anxieties about personal sexual development and feelings (89%). Nearly 9 out of 10 believe that each of these goals are important or very important. It would seem that programs of instruction with these goals would receive ready acceptance.

Most of the stated goals in the study were thought important or very important by 75 percent of the respondents. There were, however, three goals which were less acceptable than all others: "to develop more tolerant attitudes toward the sexual behavior of others (48%)", "to facilitate rewarding sexual expression (43%)", and "to create satisfying interpersonal relationships (68%)" were the goals receiving least support as important. It might be insightful to study further why policy makers in Indiana were least supportive of these goals. Each would seem to be a corollary of many of the others. The interpretation accorded these goal statements may in fact be responsible for their lesser acceptance.

Table VI. Topics to be Included in Sex Education (percentages)

Topics	Should Not Be Included	Probably Better Not to Include	Undecided	Probably Should be Included	Essential to Include
Changes at puberty.	1	0	1	26	72
Sexually transmitted diseases, e.g. syphillis, gonorrhea, herpes.	2	1	1	24	72
Menstruation.	2	0	2	25	71
Difference between sexes.	3	1	1	25	71
Social and economic consequences of adolescent pregnancy.	2	0	1	26	70
Structure and function of reproductive organs.	2	1	2	29	67
Importance of family unit in society.	2	1	2	30	66
Conception.	2	1	2	31	64
Improve communication skills with peers, parents and others.	2	0	4	39	56
Pregnancy and fetal development.	2	1	3	29	65
Concern and responsibility for other people.	2	1	3	35	59
Peer pressure and sex exploitations.	3	1	3	27	66
Wholesome, positive attitudes toward human sexuality.	3	1	3	28	65
Ideals and values determining sex behavior, e.g. concern for others, self-respect.	3	1	4	27	66
Avoiding unwanted sexual experiences.	3	1	5	30	62
Love and commitment in a relationship.	2	1	5	31	61
Dating and courtship, e.g. codes of conduct.	2	2	4	32	60

Topics	Should Not Be Included	Probably Better Not to Include	Undecided	Probably Should be Included	Essential to Include
Heredity, e.g. Rh factor, genetic diseases.	1	2	5	41	51
Childbirth.	2	2	6	34	57
Misconceptions in sex knowledge.	3	1	4	35	56
Marriage and divorce.	3	2	4	36	55
Personal and social responsibilities related to sex.	2	2	5	38	53
Decision making and problem solving about issues of sexuality.	3	1	6	43	48
Reduce conflict with peers, parents and others.	3	2	8	43	44
Availability of family planning resources.	5	5	8	42	41
Sexuality and the law.	4	3	10	47	36
Illegitimacy.	4	5	10	39	43
Impact of media on sexual behavior.	3	3	12	46	36
Menopause (change of life).	4	3	12	43	39
Sterility and fertility.	3	6	10	48	33
Contraception.	6	4	10	31	49
Masculine-feminine roles, sex stereotypes.	4	5	14	43	35
Nocturnal emissions.	3	5	16	48	29
Abortion.	8	7	11	35	40
Other sexual variations, e.g. child molesters, incest, rape.	8	11	12	36	34
Masturbation.	6	10	14	43	27
Overpopulation problems.	7	7	20	39	28
Sexual dysfunctions, e.g. impotence and frigidity.	7	16	18	38	21
Homosexuality.	11	13	19	36	21

Agreement on topics to be included ranged from a low of 57 percent for the topic of "homosexuality" to a high of 98 percent for the topic of changes at puberty. These percentages indicate those who stated that the topic was "essential to include" or "probably should be included". Of the 39 topics listed, 23 had a percentage of agreement for inclusion of 90 percent or better. Other topics at the top of the list for inclusion were: sexually transmitted diseases (98%); menstruation (96%); sex differences (96%); consequences of adolescent pregnancy (96%); reproductive physiology (96%); importance of the family unit (96%); conception (95%); improve communication skills with peers/parents (95%); and, pregnancy and fetal development/childbirth (94%). Only three of the 39 listed topics received less than 70 percent agreement for inclusion. In addition to homosexuality, sexual dysfunction (59%) and over-population (67%) were topics acceptable to less than 70 percent of the respondents. Homosexuality was the only listed topic where more than 10 percent stated it should not be included.

It would appear that a large majority of the policy makers responding would support a rather comprehensive list of topics to be included in sex education especially when they are presented at appropriate levels by qualified persons.

A. Who should handle the instruction?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
"Experts" such as doctors, nurses, psychologists, or clergy, rather than classroom teachers should be called on to handle sex instruction in the school.	9	41	24	21	7
A well qualified teacher is the most important ingredient in an effective school sex education program.	2	5	8	44	41
Before a person is allowed to teach sex education, he/she should have met some established criteria.	1	1	3	41	54
Persons who are involved in school sex education programs, in most cases, need adequate training.	1	1	1	35	62
Before sex education programs are implemented, teachers and administrators should be adequately trained in the program.	1	1	2	38	58

The last section of the questionnaire was a listing of a variety of views and comments on sex education which were found in the professional literature - 28 statements in all. The respondents were to state the level of their agreement/disagreement with each statement - ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. The groupings are somewhat arbitrary since many of the statements speak to several of the issues. The groupings were made simply to aid in reader analysis.

It would appear that there is some confusion in the policy makers' minds relative to the place of the "experts" in the program. About half disagreed with their inclusion while about 25 percent were undecided or agreed with the statement. Involvement of the "experts" in planning and consultation and occasional classroom teaching might be an effective compromise.

There is not much question about what policy makers see as the key ingredient - the well qualified teacher. It would appear that great care should be made in the selection of individuals for assignment to this subject matter and that efforts should be made to help those selected remain current and qualified.

Here again the issue is clear. Policy makers believe (95%) that those who teach sex education should be required to meet established criteria. Who establishes such criteria remains an unanswered question by this research effort. It may be that general criteria could be established by a state-wide group which would allow some special/local needs to be added by the school corporation.

It is evident that policy makers feel that those assigned sex education responsibilities are in need of special preparation. One would assume that this would include both pre and in-service educational experiences. Continuing education through various state and local agencies should be able to help such teachers keep current. It is also quite clear that administrative understanding of such a program is imperative if quality and success are to achieve.

B. How important are guidelines and supervision?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Administrative guidelines, clearly defined and written, and program supervision are more necessary in sex education programs than in other curricular areas.	2	12	8	40	38
Before sex education programs are implemented, guidelines should be developed and put into writing.	1	2	3	47	48

Policy makers obviously believe that written guidelines and close supervision are more necessary with a sex education program than with other curricular areas. Better than 75 percent of the respondents were in agreement on the necessity for such guidelines and supervision. As with teacher qualification, perhaps state level guidelines could be established, as is true in other states with the opportunity for local school corporations to revise to meet local needs.

Such a belief would appear sound as a basis if sex education programs are to be quality and able to withstand criticism. The development of guidelines should afford an excellent opportunity for input from all segments of society.

C. Who should be involved in program planning and curriculum development?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before sex education programs are implemented, parental involvement should be sought and utilized.	1	3	8	43	45
Students should be involved in curriculum development in sex education.	6	23	26	35	9
To prepare for a successful program, schools need consultants with special abilities to help in curriculum preparation.	1	8	13	45	32

Parental involvement is a given in schools today. The development of guidelines, program planning and supervision, the development of curriculum would all be excellent vehicles for parents to become actively involved. With their time and effort invested, a quality program should emerge - one to meet the needs of today's children and youth. Fewer than half believe that students should have an active role in curriculum development. Early input might be important with the final decision being made by the adult community may be an effective compromise here.

Local policy makers are in agreement that consultants with special abilities are also necessary in curriculum development. Such individuals in cooperation with a broad based local group should insure that the curriculum would meet the needs of the youth of the community.

Policy makers are about equally divided relative to the issue of having co-ed classes (30% disagree - 33% agree - 37% undecided). Perhaps the question should have been stated separately for elementary and secondary school youth. It would seem that policy makers need help and could benefit from information relative to the merits/liabilities of separate and/or co-ed classes.

D. What logistical consideration must be considered?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
It is probably best to have co-educational sex education classes.	11	19	37	28	5
If sex education is to be offered in school, it should be an after school non-credit offering.	23	51	17	7	2
Schools should excuse students from sex education programs when parents are not in favor of such programs.	3	8	15	52	22
Sex education in the high school should be handled as a required, distinct and separate subject rather than integrating it in other subject areas.	8	30	26	29	7
Adequate sex education is best accomplished by making appropriate, authoritative literature on the subject available to youth.	8	45	17	25	4

There is little question in the minds of the respondents that if such instruction is offered it should be a part of the regular school day, with carnegie unit credit rather than as a tag on at the end of the day. If this latter scheduling were the rule, policy makers probably feel that an unwanted "specialness" might be attached to such instruction.

There is argument that parents should have the opportunity to have their children excused from such instruction. This is probably the rule in most schools where sex education is offered. It appears to be a very workable guideline.

The respondents are rather evenly divided over the question of a separate course or integration of the content into existing courses (38% disagree - 36% agree). Policy makers might benefit from information relative to the pros/cons of each of these plans.

The majority of respondents believe that the provision of appropriate literature on sexuality alone is not the best way to provide such instruction. It would appear that they feel that adult planning, administration and supervision is a necessary part and that to let students interpret the literature and its meaning for them is not an acceptable format for sex education.

E. The school's role in sex education.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Sex education in the schools must address teaching about related values and attitudes.	1	4	10	62	23
Special sexuality needs of students should be met, when appropriate, by school staff on an individual basis.	4	15	27	45	9
If the whole chils is to be educated, the sexuality aspect cannot be neglected.	3	5	10	65	16
The school, because of its personnel, facilities, and access to all students, is in an advantageous position for teaching sex education.	3	6	7	69	14
The schools need to assume more responsibility for sex education.	6	11	23	50	10
Sex education is a "frills" course and has no place in the school curriculum.	26	55	12	4	3

The respondents feel that sex education in schools must be more than factual in nature. Eighty-five percent feel that values and attitudes must also be addressed. Nearly as many (81%) indicate that sexuality is an integral of the whole and thus the school has a responsibility. They do not consider it a frill.

Eighty-three percent agree that the school is an advantageous place for sex education because of their personnel, facilities and access to students. Sixty percent of the respondents feel that schools must assume more responsibility for sex education than is currently the case. Better than half (54%) agree that school personnel should accept a counseling role for individuals with special questions/concerns about their sexuality.

From the responses to these items, it seems clear that local school policy makers feel that the school has a responsibility for sex education. Their view of sex education encompasses the valuing and attitudinal aspects of such instruction. Any disagreement would appear not to be relative to the school's responsibility but rather what should be taught. Education of policy makers, parents, other community groups should really address the "what to teach" issue more aggressively.

F. The content of sex education.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Sex education should not include "preaching a particular set of values at youngsters".	5	14	11	42	27
Sex education should provide the facts, point out their implications, and let the young decide on their own sexual behavior.	7	21	13	48	11
In sex education, "off color" references and insinuations should be eliminated.	1	3	6	37	52
Sex education should help students understand themselves better.	1	1	2	59	38

Nearly 70 percent of the respondents feel that "preaching about a particular set of values" is not the preferred method while 59 percent feel that facts and their implications should be provided and let youth be the leaders. Their feeling is that one of sex education's goals should be to help students understand themselves better. Policy makers have a real desire to help young people

learn to understand themselves and give these youth much credit for being able to make sensible decisions relative to their sexuality. Research which provides how this might best be accomplished would prove extremely valuable as local school boards grapple with such a weighty issue. It is patently clear that one thing local boards don't want is instruction which treats our sexual selves in a degrading, innuendo-laden fashion.

G. The need for a partnership between home, school and community.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Sex education in the home is often inadequate.	2	2	3	61	33
Sex education in schools often leads to inappropriate sexual behavior in the young.	19	50	24	4	3
Instruction in the schools should work in partnership with home and church for a comprehensive education about sexuality.	2	5	9	46	38

The study respondents feel that parents often don't do an inadequate job of sex education (94%) but that a home/school/community partnership in such education is a necessity. This suggests that what may be as important as a school based program would be an adult education program in sexuality. One option might be for an adult program to be conducted simultaneously at least during the early offerings of such instruction. There is some ambivalence among the respondents relative to the impact of a sex education program on youth behavior, but nearly 70 percent disagree with the statement that there is negative impact.

At the end of the questionnaire, an opportunity was provided for the respondents to express other feelings relative to sex education in the school. The following comments (107) are presented directly as written except for grammatical editing. They are grouped into categories for ease of analysis for the reader. Comments about:

1. The place for sex education

. I feel that sex education should be taught in the home. But I am not naive, I know that it often is not. I feel that it should be part of the school curriculum if handled correctly. If it must cover and/or condone "way out" lifestyles, homosexuality, etc., then I am against it.

. I am basically opposed to the public schools entering into another curricular area because someone thinks there is a need or because parents aren't doing their jobs. It appears that what we need is a good course in parenting and family responsibility and to educate parents so they can fulfill their parental responsibilities.

. I believe the topic is the responsibility of the parents. Although some parents side-step this responsibility, I don't believe the public school should attempt to develop a curriculum to replace parental responsibility. Caring teachers may offer advice and counsel to needing students or inquisitive students but not in a classroom setting. Parents should perhaps be given an opportunity to seek help to prepare themselves to educate their children.

. Schools need help, can't do it all.

. I don't feel we have too much of a problem in our community. Our parents and peer's parents have been educating us sexually since the beginning of mankind. Surely we humans do not have to take classes on our sex. We must let our schools concentrate on educating in the basic areas. That is the purpose of secondary schools.

. I'm a farmer, and I find it very hard to respond to sex education. My children have more access to sex through our animals program.

. Schools are not the place to teach what rightfully belongs in the home. The parents are responsible for the character development of their children and "not" the state. Many teachers do not have high enough moral standards to teach about sex.

. I do not feel that the schools have any business getting into sex education. This is the parents' concern, and the education should be handled by them. This instrument was poorly constructed in as much as we either agreed or show no opinion. I almost did not complete it since some of the (or maybe most) statements were vague or unanswerable.

. Sex education belongs in the home. I cannot imagine a situation where a teacher or administrator would or should be entrusted with this responsibility.

. Sex is not a matter of the school - school is already into many areas. Maybe we should encourage parents to do their job and assume their responsibilities.

. There is no basis for teaching sex education in the public schools. As so called "education" has increased, teenage pregnancies have soared. At a time when students are gaining B.S. and M.S. degrees without the ability to read or write, it's time for educators to do the basics without going into such complex areas.

. I do not believe that schools should have the responsibility for teaching sex education because the unreal decisions that must be made should reflect the home and church. I realize that this is not being done adequately at present and schools should consider taking up the slack. Just how much of this responsibility schools should accept is a question I have not fully resolved.

. Schools cannot solve the identified problems, and it is not our mandate to be the parents and home for young people.

. Sex education programs are not likely to be successful in public schools anytime soon.

. Because of our parents not taking the responsibility to teach their children the moral values and a positive family life at home, we have to teach this generation so they will take the responsibility when they are parents. The moral issues of right and wrong and of sexual values and responsibilities are explained in the Bible. This society is based on the Bible principles, and I believe this needs to be continued. The weakness of our system is the parents who want to push their responsibilities on the church and schools.

. Parents should teach sex education in the home and not put their responsibility on someone else. I believe the purpose of the church is to prepare souls for the hereafter, not to teach sex.

. I'm not sure public schools should be in the business of educating about sex. The home is being de-emphasized. We need to help young people take their place in a society that is shaped from the home and its values not as public education sees that society.

. Sex education should be taught by parents, churches, and doctors in a controlled private environment.

. I feel that sex education should be taught, but is the school the place to teach this? Where can it be taught with dignity?

. I feel sex education can best be accomplished by the parents in a responsible family. I also realize that too many children get no sex education at home. This is why I feel it should be taught in the schools. I'm not sure it should be a mandatory course, although that would have some merit. Most of the opposition to sex education in schools today is from radical church groups and irresponsible parents who are neglecting their responsibilities.

. I think sex education is the responsibility of the parents, not the schools!

. I do not feel sex education belongs in the schools, but since the home and church are not, in most cases, doing their job, it falls upon the schools.

. In a perfect situation, sex education should be handled in the home. Since our world is full of individuals unable to express this to their children, the school is forced to deal with it.

. Ideally, students should have this training at home. It is a personal matter that involves religion, morals, family. Some students aren't having proper standards and guidelines (examples) before them. Schools are expected to do more and more for less and less.

. Sex education should be done in the home with help from the church. Since this is not being done, the schools are having to assume even more responsibility in the upbringing of the child. It's wrong to continue to dump more responsibility on the school and expect them to be the answer to everything and not give them more money for operations.

. School systems cannot be everything to all students. Parents have responsibility for their kids. This is an area for parents - not schools. School systems should provide basic education - 3 R's - not serve as babysitters or parents.

. Too many schools teach sex education as a result of various social pressures.

. This subject is not covered, in most cases, as it should be in the home. I don't believe, however, that public education should try to step in and attempt to cover every task that exists.

. Public education is not prepared to handle this question. Anything taught poorly can be more damaging than failure to teach at all.

. As you can see, I feel sex education is a parental responsibility. As Moses trained the fathers, and they in turn trained their families. I think you are aiming at the wrong group. Sex cannot be separated from Judeo-Christian morals, and I don't think we have any teachers who qualify in all these aspects. Let's get back to quality education that has been sorely lacking in the last 10-15 years.

. Sex education should be taught at home by their parents. Schools should teach the 3 R's.

. I feel it's not the responsibility of our public schools to teach sex education as a separate class.

. Public funds should not be used to teach sex education. Sex should be taught one on one when the child is ready, preferably by the parent. Children develop at varied ages, and opinions on what should be taught are numerous. Thus trying to group all children together for the same instruction is wrong.

. Sex education should not be a concern of the public school system above and beyond biology class.

. I feel that quite often a child will "experiment" with a partner concerning the area of sex mainly because they are not educated or informed. They feel this is the only way they can learn. It is past time that schools assumed their responsibility in the area of sex education. Too little knowledge is more dangerous than too much.

2. Sex education with/without values

. I believe sex education should be taught in schools only if Judeo-Christian morals are included. One cannot separate sex (which was intended for marriage only) from the moral aspect.

. Sex education belongs in a P.E. class. Sex education should be taught by parents. Sex education should be for the parents on how to teach their children about sex. Students are too immature to take a course like this seriously. We should teach the morals of life, morals set from the 10 commandments.

. I feel sex education as it is now taught in schools is many times not timely (wrong age), not detailed enough, and not taught by qualified (understanding) teachers, causing students to experiment earlier than they would had they not been exposed to the subject.

. Sex education without related moral education would be a great disservice to our students. The ideal program in my opinion is to fund staff and organize a parent education class.

. This subject cannot be taught without moral values. A supposed "moral" approach carries humanistic overtones which are a moral code into themselves.

. The media should not be allowed to exploit. This may shock you, but if the schools could teach the Bible, we would not have the sex problems of today. Media is helping to destroy our young people.

. In some instances, sex education is used inappropriately and may even provide an incentive for sexual activity. However, the lack of sex education can lead to inappropriate sexual behavior to a much higher degree. Therefore, I would opt for sex education.

. I have observed the public behavior of our teens and preteens with much concern. Had I been subjected to some of the physical contact observed, I would have been in a heap of trouble before my 16th birthday. If we saw the population of an average secondary school playing with dynamite in the gym or parking lot, we would surely take action.

. I have sat through many school board conventions. Outside of God there are no answers for morals. Man is not a behavioristic animal unless we continue to assume God is not there You and your department have a chance to make a difference.

. Sex education would be most difficult to teach without establishing a set of values. Agreement on how to teach could be difficult.

. I feel there should be sex education in the classroom though not required - the facts mixed with the moral aspect of sexual behavior.

. Broken homes are already at 40 percent. You must teach that sex is reserved for marriage. If you can't or won't do that, you'll add another 40 percent, and this country has gone down the tube. There is much more to say, but I don't think you want to hear it.

. I think it would be good to offer sex education if morals are mentioned without preaching.

. There is much too much attention paid to sex education. It seems everyone has their own values and tries very hard to force others to agree with them. If marriage and family unit were mentioned as often as the word "sex", it might help in many ways.

. My primary concern lies in the area of values and attitudes. No one can teach my children how I feel and think. I am the only one. I certainly do not want my child to be taught values and attitudes in opposition to my own.

3. Emphasis within a program

. Girls should be more impressed with the fact that they are burdened with child care and support, and the boys are not held responsible. On most occasions, the girls end up trying to live on public assistance.

. I feel the study of human sexuality should begin at the K level, should always include the correct biological terms and should increase in complexity throughout the grades. If the proper foundation is laid early on, misconceptions are less likely to arise. It should never, until maybe high school, be pulled out of a science or health curriculum, but should be taught matter of factly, as one teaches any other biological function, such as the digestive system.

. I do feel the schools need a good course in anatomy and reproduction, which every student is required to take. Other than that, I see no need for sex education nor are funds available to set up a good program.

. Our job is not to take over the parents' job in this area, but we should offer sex education in a less demanding role.

. I strongly feel that students, if given the facts, can make sound judgments as to their own sexuality. The problem is often they don't have the facts to make these judgments. My feeling is that if the schools can help make this period of personal adjustment any easier for the students, it should do so without hesitation.

. Should be taught at home, generally is not. It does require, when taught in the school, teachers who have exceptional rapport with the students. They can teach that it is a natural, very important part of our lives, and without embarrassment. I believe students would have a healthier attitude about sex if taught in the schools.

. Pre-college education should concern itself with facts - scientific facts that are agreed upon by everyone. High school and Jr. high school students are confused by conflicting sets of ethics and by "situation ethics". If they know and understand the facts of anatomy, mating and disease, then each student can follow the teachings and/or permissiveness of his/her own family and religion.

. A public high school having an enrollment under 1,000 students and having some 30 pregnant girls needs to consider sex education as soon as possible.

. It seems the state of Indiana as a whole is suffering from a very high rate of illegitimate births and teenage pregnancies - especially in rural areas where health care is hard to come by, contraception is especially difficult and there are no real choices for many teenagers. It seems appropriate and necessary to provide some form of "family planning" mobile unit or some other facility to provide these services so that they have some choice. For the people who are adamantly opposed to sex education: We live in a world with things the way they are - not as any of us wants them to be! God created people sexually, so sex can't be all bad.

. Schools should teach sexual biology, physiology and psychology; differences between intercourse and love and the similarities. Parents should teach the don'ts. Young people should decide their individual behavior.

. An essential part of concept V-26 should be parental responsibility; child psychology and development; and the "battered child" problem.

4. Planning such a program

. I believe we need, as schools, to do more in the area of sex education, but this does not mean that school staff needs to do all planning, teaching, etc. We can certainly make facilities available, and we can cooperate with programming, but there is, in my judgment, a need to include other persons, programs, etc. to deal with teaching. I don't see the schools taking full responsibility for dealing with an area that clearly involves parents, church, society.

. Parent/community involvement is important and basic to the establishment of a sex education program (not a course, but a program). Of equal importance is the on-going involvement of this group to keep the program viable and of high quality.

. Sex education should be taught in a positive manner and with parent approval and with the help of the religious people in the community. The program should never be a required subject.

. Sex education is needed - should start with parents - educating them and getting them to demand this. I had hoped to get a small voluntary after school program for parents and students together. This attempt did not succeed - lack of follow through. This was one way I felt some positive feedback of a good program with parental support could be developed.

. Sex education should be set up by teachers, nurses, and parents. It should be an elective course.

. The view here is teach students how to think and not what to think or what to think about.

. The school nurse, counselors and PTA etc. can surely help decide if these programs are necessary. It would not have to be up to board members to decide.

. The state of Indiana should lay out a mandated program - ratified by legislature so that political problems are settled at state level.

. A bonified sex education program in a small school like ours in a rural community would take a lot of planning and community ground work before started. The only problem I have with another area to cover in our curriculum is backing from the state or somebody. We feed them, special education, vocational education, ears, eyes, teeth, gifted, sex education, etc. and catch hell because we aren't getting anything done in education today.

. Start programs in grade 1 and develop upward to grade 12.

. Clearly, a high level of professional competence is required in dealing with such a socially volatile subject. Schools should work carefully within prescribed guidelines. My personal bias indicates we should be working much harder with parents to help them teach their own youngsters to not have sex.

. I feel strongly that sex education should be taught within the context of total human development as part of the home economics family life curriculum. Sex education should not be taught, in a fragmented manner, as a part of a biology, health or social studies class. Teachers in these areas usually are not as well trained in all areas of human development, personal relations and family life as home economics. Teachers need more specialized training before such a program is offered. The training, attitudes, and abilities of the persons teaching the class should be the critical concern of such a course, if offered.

. The course needs to be taught at the freshman level. The junior and senior years are too late.

. Sex education should not be a special course, but taught in health, home economics, literature, etc. courses.

. I believe there is a need for both co-ed and separated. This will help the ones that are ignorant and the timid students to ask more questions and yet know it is important to know the right answers, yet hear questions from both sexes.

. This is such an important and neglected area that we do not have the luxury of waiting to see if the parent or clergy can adequately handle it. The program must be presented in such a way that the public will accept it, even though some individuals may loudly disagree. Everyone on our staff must be prepared to deal with it. Students must have someone they can turn to. Preferably a parent but in most cases it will be a teacher or friend.

. I feel it is important to give true facts. Morality is important for church and home. Schools should not get into that area. High school is late for most sex education. Freshmen are alright, but after that you are a little late.

. I feel that often public controversy is almost invited by making sex education a "big deal". The possibility of introducing the least controversial topics into a related subject area a few at a time, and expanding the program as acceptance is achieved is certainly an alternative worth considering.

. I was very fortunate to be on a panel of teachers, parents and students to help set up the "curriculum guidelines" for a parenting class as well as other home economic courses. Included were the needs of students such as sex education, family living, parenting, budgeting, etc. This was very informative both from a parent point of view and now more importantly, from a board member point of view. Male and female members were present, and we had many excellent open discussions concerning needs and desires of the young people. This was prior to my election as a board member.

. In our school we worked with the clergy. The school nurse and guidance people conducted the classes. It seemed to work successfully.

. If the parents and community stop a program because of emotional issues, then at least integrate the program in existing courses. Our biggest threat today is the emotional reaction of the "moral majority segment" in our own community of schools to the teaching sex education. It is imperative we select the best staff and involve the parents so that 10 years from now we have eliminated most of those fears and developed the support needed to truly teach sex education in our schools. It is for this reason that the course should be an elective. A child, whose parents do not want their child in the course, should be allowed to remain out of the class. I would rather have the majority of the students in than to lose the entire program because of a child who was forced into the program.

5. The role/preparation of the teacher

. The teacher is the most important element in teaching sex education. Since the education profession has no system which is useful in selecting and evaluating teachers, I don't believe qualified teachers could be reliably selected to teach sex education even though something is desperately needed. Our school board is looking for a solution, but it appears none is on the horizon.

. Most teachers I have met have not been adequately trained or seem at ease teaching sex education. Planned Parenthood material is one sided and based on questionable material. Right to Life is also a one sided view. If morality is totally left out of sex education it is also one sided.

. I feel this is a very important part of every young person's life, and every child is different so therefore every child should not be treated the same. I feel the school does have a responsibility to help every child. There are lots of problems that are in our schools today that should be corrected. I for one think we need to look more at the teachers' background involving sexual attitudes before we trust our children to them.

. "Qualified" teachers may have had training, but I strongly believe that they are not always prepared to do this job. An integration of community leaders (pastors, physicians, nurses, social workers) plus, the teachers would best fit the job. Too many teachers feel that they are adequately trained and an "authority" on a subject that entails much more than general knowledge. It would be an exceptional teacher that could truthfully handle the job properly.

. Many educators lack the moral judgment and standards which I feel are imperative to a wholesome, comprehensive sex education program. Better left alone than poorly taught.

. I don't think we have enough teachers able to be good sex educators, and we certainly don't have the money to provide a thorough approach to the subject. Those are my concerns.

. The teacher is the most important part of any program. However, the amount of vertical planning necessary for an effective approach means that curriculum planning is also very important.

6. Opposition to such instruction

. Our community is very conservative. We would have a great difficulty in implementing a full scale sex education course if it were a required course. An attempt by some counselors to have a two day class at a church during the teachers' conference did not succeed.

. Whenever the topic of "sex education in schools" comes up at a particular church, a group of parents will come forth in opposition to such a program because they feel they can do a better job than the local schools can. Yet there is not a high school in the country that can go through a school year without some girl becoming pregnant. All high schools need a sex education program, but we need to educate the parents on why such a program is needed.

. Please keep in mind that most of the respondents to your questionnaire have no concept or more important, first hand knowledge of what actually goes on in a sex education class. I doubt that 5 percent of the school corporation have at least one truly qualified sex educator in their employment. Your concerns are subject to a distinct change when it is your child being educated.

. We sometimes feel that we can't afford to become involved with the conflict that evolves from this issue. Society is not sending us a clear message. When society sends a better definition, we stand ready to act. Also, we simply can't continue to be all things to all people. Sex, drugs, nutrition are all important, but the public appears to be more interested in SAT scores. At the present time we are protecting our instructional time as never before.

. More sex education should be taught in the school, but the question is, "Will the public permit it?"

. I think each school community is unique in itself. Ours has a rather large church that will have difficulty accepting any program of this type in the school. I feel that young people need these answers made available to them at least on a voluntary basis.

. These are my opinions which would not necessarily be acceptable to the somewhat provincial and/or religious groups of our community.

7. The research design/questionnaire

. Person or persons who prepared "instrument" need more or better training in questionnaire formation.

. Some of the choices were difficult because your questions were based upon a preconceived fallacy.

. I think Section II of this questionnaire had very little meaning in deciding whether or not to teach sex education.

. This questionnaire does not appear to me to be one which is looking for opinions, but rather one that wishes to support sex education in our public schools. Maybe, I am being overly sensitive to the issue, however, in the section opposed to sex education in schools we were made to sound like an ass if we agreed to them.

. This questionnaire is so "slanted" in its method of questioning and presumption as to truth that it cannot possibly acquire a good cross section of opinions on this subject. The teaching of sex education without moral guidelines does a great disservice to our youth.

. Thank you for this opportunity. It has given me much food for thought about my own education and our school's program.

. Sex education is a must in the school. However, it takes a skillful person with a high degree of maturity to do a good job. We are definitely dragging our feet on this one. Hopefully, your efforts will be helpful.

. If indeed there is a need for sex education in the public schools, nowhere is there mention of parents assuming all or part of the education process - terrible omission. I think the survey has failed in not allowing parent involvement in this process. I personally feel that any program such as this will not change a thing because kids will be kids no matter what they know. I don't believe public education can be all things to all people, and in that respect, I don't believe educators or surveyors such as yourself have evidenced a true need for this type of education role at whatever level it may be assumed to be needed. I would hope that this survey is not going to be a tool for obtaining a true need. You have a tremendously effective instrument to achieve a good educational end if the program is undertaken with good intentions - Don't screw it up!

. Used 10 minutes to respond, answers are first/offhead responses. Probably need to spend many, many more hours completing this survey.

. Excellent questionnaire!

IV. Summary

The findings and conclusion which follow are based upon the returns received from 616 policy makers in Indiana schools. Returns were received from at least one policy maker in all but 25 of the school corporations listed in the 1981-82 Indiana School Boards Association Directory. All listed superintendents and board members were potential respondents in the study.

A. Findings

1. Seventy-five percent of policy makers in Indiana schools believe that the school has a responsibility to teach about human sexuality.
2. Eighty-two percent approve of sex instruction in their schools.
3. A majority of policy makers (56%) believe that their colleagues would agree with their position - a significant percentage (42%) are of the belief that there is substantial disagreement within their board on this issue.
4. Fifty-two percent of the respondents state that their programs currently go beyond the teaching reproductive biology.
5. Of the group with a program limited to reproductive biology, 70 percent or better would be supportive if qualified teachers requested and developed a more comprehensive program.
6. Less than 20 percent of the respondents indicate having received requests for instruction in sex education from any community group, e.g. parents, teachers, students, community leaders.
7. Only a third of the respondents who indicated a program broader than reproductive biology were interested in restructuring or expanding the program. Another 21 percent indicated they did not know if program changes were warranted in their school.
8. Eighty-one percent of the respondents stated that they were unaware of any adverse public criticism of existing programming in sex education.
9. Seventy-four percent were unaware of any public praise for such programming.
10. Slightly more than half (55%) believe that their school corporation has quality materials/resources to carry on an effective program. Materials would appear to be lacking in the minds of 45 percent of the respondents.
11. Eighty-three percent of those responding indicated that they were unaware of any successful sex education programs in schools in their immediate area.
12. A significant majority of respondents agree that there are several reasons why sex education in school is important. These reasons include:
    a. the lack of knowledge about sexuality;
    b. an inability to communicate about one's sexuality;
    c. the oft-times misinformation and influence emanating from peers;
    d. the mixed messages received from our sex-oriented society;

e. the need for viewing sexual behavior in more than physical terms;
f. the appropriateness of such instruction at this stage of growth and development of youth;
g. an understanding that sexual behavior results from a variety of motivation, some positive, some negative;
h. that instruction in sex education is helpful in the decision making of youth;
i. that decisions about sex and the resultant behavior has a significant influence throughout life.

13. Seventy-three percent felt that the role of the church was not an important reason (church vs. state) or were confused as to what the relationship between church programs and school programs should be.
14. The primary reason for not offering sex education in schools appears to be:
    a. concern over parental reaction;
    b. lack of qualified teachers;
    c. concern over community reaction;
    d. concern over church reaction.
15. Reasons which seem to be of little importance or barriers to sex education include:
    a. no time available;
    b. lack of student maturity;
    c. reluctance to include programming in schools;
    d. lack of funds.
16. Policy makers support (66% or better) a variety of commonly expressed goals of quality sex education, such as:
    a. the provision of accurate information;
    b. the reduction of problem behavior;
    c. the assist in decision making about sexuality matters;
    d. to remove fear and anxiety about personal sexual development and feelings.
17. The only two of thirteen stated goals felt of little or no importance by a significant minority of respondents (at least 1/3) were:
    a. to become more tolerant of the behavior and attitudes of others (37%);
    b. to facilitate rewarding sexual expression (35%).
18. Each of the 13 goals stated were thought important or very important by more respondents than by the number of their peers who considered the goals to be of little importance or no importance.
19. Of the 39 topics listed, 23 (which include knowledge, behavior and attitude) were considered important to include by at least 90 percent of the respondents.
20. Only three of the listed were accepted for inclusion by less than 70 percent of the respondents:
    a. homosexuality (57%);
    b. sexual dysfunctions, e.g. impotence, frigidity (59%);
    c. overpopulation (67%).
21. High levels of acceptance (90% or better) were accorded typical areas dealing with enhancing communication, responsibility, concern for others and decision making.
22. Homosexuality was the only listed topic where more than 10 percent of respondents felt it should definitely <u>not</u> be included.

23. The quality of sex education programs is dependent primarily on the qualification of the instructor.
24. If sex education programs are to be offered, it is imperative that qualified people present the program.
25. It is essential that program guidelines be developed and in writing and that program supervision be ever present.
26. A broad based community group should be involved in program planning and curriculum development including parents, consultants and to a lesser extent students.
27. Policy makers are divided as to whether sex education should be co-educational or taught separately.
28. Policy makers are in support of sex education as being a regular part of the school curriculum rather than as non-credit, after school, etc.
29. The large majority of policy makers (74%) believe that parents should choose whether or not their children participate in sex education.
30. There is confusion about the best way to schedule sex education in the high schools - separate class or integrated into other classes.
31. The majority of policy makers believe that providing literature only is not a satisfactory way to provide sex education.
32. Policy makers view the school's role in sex education as both instructional and counseling.
33. Policy makers view sex education as including instruction around values and attitudes as well as factual information.
34. Sixty percent of the respondents felt the school should assume more responsibility for sex education while 17 percent indicated they disagreed with more responsibility for the school.
35. The respondents (89%) felt that there was no place in sex education for "off color" references and insinuations.
36. While 94 percent of the respondents felt that sex education in the home was often inadequate, they were equally supportive of a partnership between home, school and community in the development of a comprehensive education about sexuality.
37. Nearly 70 percent of the respondents feel that sex education programs do not lead to inappropriate sexual behavior in the learner. Only 7 percent of the respondents agreed that such was the case.

B. Conclusions

Policy makers in Indiana schools:

1. Believe that the schools have a responsibility to include sex education as a part of their curriculum. This view parallels the general public's opinion.
2. Believe that a formal school sex education program is only one part of the sex education a child receives and is done in conjunction with the primary sex educators, the parents, and other social institutions (church, community organizations, etc.).
3. Believe that many issues/problems in our society would support the need for quality sex education programming with dimensions including the biological, psychological and social aspects of life.
4. Agree with professionals regarding the goals of sex education in that they should be broadly stated far beyond the prevention of undesirable sexual behavior, and represent a holistic health approach.
5. Would support a quality sex education program which included a well qualified teacher (identified by policy makers as the key issue); a well-developed comprehensive curriculum which deals with knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors; and community involvement from all elements within a community.
6. Believe that program guidelines should be in writing and that regular supervision of such programs is essential.
7. Believe that a sex education program should be offered as a part of the regular curriculum for credit and that parents should have the option to exclude their children if desired.
8. Are concerned about several sensitive issues related to the implementation of a sex education program (e.g. understanding both proponents and opponents in perspective).
9. Believe that students and parents will be able to gain from a quality school sex education program.
10. Believe that any effort to succeed in school sex education programming needs the partnership of the school, the home, and the community.

C. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. That two copies of this study be sent to all school board presidents/superintendents in the state of Indiana. Additional copies should also be sent to the executive directors of their respective state organizations.
2. That, where possible, school boards analyze the findings and conclusions to determine what, if any, meaning the study has for them.
3. That a center for sexuality education be established in the state of Indiana to function as a resource for local school boards contemplating incorporating sex education into their curriculum.
4. That a well-developed resource packet of materials be prepared and distributed on demand to help local school board members better understand the issues relative to sex education in the schools.
5. That efforts be made to convince the teacher preparation institutions of the state of the need for developing curricula to help teachers gain expertise to become effective in the area.
6. That the Department of Public Instruction take the leadership in convening a group to determine the need for written guidelines for sex education programs and the qualifications for those who shall teach. This group should be broad based in their backgrounds.
7. That in-service programs should be developed for school boards and school administrators regarding the issue of sex education in schools to help them better understand the various dimensions of this issue.

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY MUNCIE, INDIANA 47306-1099

COLLEGE OF SCIENCES & HUMANITIES
Department of Physiology and Health Science

April 8, 1982

Dear Board Member/Superintendent:

The inclusion of family life and sex education in the public school systems is still an extremely controversial topic in the U.S. today. Consequently, both the existence and nature of family life and sex education programs are persistently questioned in many individual schools and school districts in Indiana.

In order to attempt to understand the controversies involved in this issue it would be helpful to know the views and perceptions of the policy-setting boards of our Indiana school systems. The assistance of each member of every board of education in the state and the superintendents of schools is being sought in a survey which is attempting to elicit these views by means of the enclosed questionnaire. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers to the items of the questionnaire. They are largely items of opinion. This study is being conducted with grant support from the Lilly Endowment. Advisement was obtained from the Executive Directors of the Indiana School Boards Association and the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents.

Due to the controversial nature of this subject, signatures on the questionnaire are being waived--with the expectation that the sincerity of the replies will not be affected.

Please complete the survey and return it in the envelope provided by April 23, 1982. This will allow us time for a follow-up mailing before schools close for the summer. Also, please complete the postcard provided and send it independently after you have completed the questionnaire so that we may avoid sending you a second mailing. In addition, this will assure your anonymity.

Your participation in this study is earnestly requested and will be highly valued. A high percentage of return is necessary for us to be certain of views of important policy makers. We strongly urge you to participate. Your views are important. A summary of the findings will be sent to participants as soon as possible. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

David Marini Herb Jones

Dr. David Marini/Dr. Herbert Jones
Department of Physiology and Health Science
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306

DM/HJ:jl

Enclosures: 3

Return Postcard

Please check in the appropriate space (s) and return this card:

____ I returned the instrument on _____, 1982.

I do not intend to return the questionnaire for the following reason(s):

____ it is too long.
____ I do not think the subject is of concern to a Board of Education/Superintendent.
____ it is too complicated.
____ it was poorly constructed.
____ the topic is too controversial.
____ I prefer not to give a reason.
____ Other: _____

Follow Up Postcard

Dear Superintendent/Board Member:

We recently mailed a questionnaire to you on the subject of family life and sex education. To date we have not received a response from you and thus this card is intended to be a gentle reminder. Because of the delay in printing time and the fact that many of you were attending school board meetings last week, it is our understanding that you may have had difficulty in meeting the April 23 deadline. In lieu of this, we would like to encourage you to complete the instrument and return to us by May 21.

Our return is running about 50% at this time and thus your participation is highly valued. We want our final report to be as reflective of Indiana school boards/superintendents as is possible. Thank you very much for your consideration of our request.

David Marini — Herb Jones

David Marini, Ph.D. — Herb Jones, H.S.D.